

# FACT SHEET

## Offering Financial Products at VITA/ TCE Sites



### Key Messages

- VITA and TCE sites can offer taxpayers who receive free tax prep services at their sites a no-cost user friendly direct debit card.
- Direct debit funds are protected by FDIC, VISA or MasterCard's zero liability policies and identify theft.
- IRS does not endorse financial products, including debit cards.
- Government policies prohibit IRS employees working at VITA and TCE sites from offering any financial tools such as the debit card as an option.
- Ensure your screening process identifies taxpayers who may want other financial products since government policies prohibit IRS employees working at VITA and TCE sites from offering any financial tools such as the debit card option.
- Adhere to IRC 7216 rules included in Publication 4299, *Privacy and Confidentiality, A Public Trust*.
- Questions pertaining to the debit card must be directed to the debit card provider.
- Direct taxpayer refund questions to the "Where's My Refund?" section of the IRS website, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or call 1-800-829-1954.

*This fact sheet provides partners with information on offering taxpayers a direct debit card in lieu of a paper refund check.*

During the past couple of years, IRS and its partners have worked with several financial institutions and tax software providers to offer a no-cost, user friendly reloadable debit card. This card is available for the 2011 filing season, and as IRS partners you can offer taxpayers who receive tax prep services at your VITA/TCE sites this enhanced secure refund option.

Taxpayers electing to receive their federal refund via the debit card can virtually spend their entire refund without incurring a fee and avoid paying high-cost check cashing fees. With the reloadable debit card, taxpayer refunds are protected by FDIC, VISA or MasterCard's zero liability policies and safeguarded against identity theft.

### How can I participate?

If you elect to participate in the program, refer to the Direct debit card article on the Volunteer Partner Resource page of [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) which provides a comparison chart of available financial institutions. To participate in the debit card program, contact the vendor from the comparison chart and sign up for the program. Carefully review the chart since service is limited to certain geographic areas.

### Already enrolled in the debit card program?

Questions pertaining to the debit card must be directed to the debit card provider.

All partners must adhere to the IRC 7216 rules included in Publication 4299, *Privacy and Confidentiality, A Public Trust*, if sharing taxpayer information received during the tax preparation process for any purpose other than tax preparation. For questions regarding the IRS 7216 requirement contact your SPEC relationship manager.

If IRS employees work as volunteers at your VITA and TCE sites, please note and respect their rules of conduct which prohibit them from offering taxpayers the choice of enlisting in any financial products, including debit cards. As government employees, they are only permitted to offer United States Savings Bonds as a refund option.

### Refund Questions?

Taxpayers can check their refunds on [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) by selecting "Where's My Refund?"

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